THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) to (d) Two Pre-Qualified Bidders (PQBs) namely Bharti-Changi consortium and L&T-Hochtief consortium did not submit their bids. These two had raised concerns regarding responsibilities of the airport operator in the final and frozen version of the RFP and the Performance Bank Guarantee which could not be agreed to.

(e) and (f) The question regarding cost escalation does not arise since the bids were submitted by the PQBs within the stipulated date and based on the terms and conditions.

International airport at Visakhapatnam

200. SHRI NANDI YELLAIAH: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the State Government of Andhra Pradesh has sent any request to the Union Government to set up an international airport at Visakhapatnam;

(b) if so, the status of the said proposal and its plan outlay; and

(c) by when the work to construct/set up the international airport will start?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) to (c) No formal proposal for setting up an international airport at Vishakhapatnam has so far been received from the State Government of Andhra Pradesh. However, upgradation work of existing Vishakhapatnam airport to international level has already been initiated in coordination with Indian Navy and State Government.

Allocation of loss making routes to private airlines

†201. SHRI KRIPAL PARMAR: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) the number of new private airlines in the country which have been given permission to operate their flights;

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.